



State of Washington

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

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Main Office location: Natural Resources Building - 1111 Washington Street SE - Olympia, WA

DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE (DNS)

Name of Proposal: DNS 14-067: YAKIMA RIVER EDGE STRUCTURES

Description of Proposal:

Yakama Nation's Yakima Klickitat Fisheries Project is implementing an edge habitat restoration project on the mainstem Yakima River near the Cle Elum Supplementation and Research Facility located at 800 Spring Chinook Way, Cle Elum, WA. Wood structures will be installed on river banks and gravel bars during low flows, after cessation of irrigation delivery in the fall. The bed and banks of this reach of the Yakima are owned by Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Fish habitat productivity in this reach of the Yakima River is compromised by flow regulation and floodplain loss. Railroad and interstate revetments prevent side channel development and irrigation delivery from 800k acre feet of reservoirs keep the flows artificially high in the summer, while reducing the frequency of flood flows that historically shaped the river and maintained productive side channels. Euro-settlement resulted in removal of wood from the floodplain and stream channel. This location (and many other areas) is seen by many as an irrigation conduit - efficient water conveyance, but straight and simplified, with extremely low fish habitat productivity. However, there is opportunity to rebuild habitat complexity and improve salmonid production by installing modest wood structures on the margins of the channel.

This reach is proximate to the Cle Elum River confluence. Abundant numbers of spring Chinook salmon migrate from the ocean 520 miles upstream to spawn immediately above this project location. Mid Columbia steelhead and bull trout, both of which are listed "threatened" under the Endangered Species Act also use this reach of river. The project is intended as a proof of concept phase, to determine whether small wood structures can be built at low cost along the margins of the stream channel, that will still provide juvenile salmonid rearing habitat that is of extremely high functional productivity. Implementation of this project will promote discussions with other interest groups regarding management of the river for multiple uses.

Three types of structures will be built; Type 1 structures will be along the banks with vertical posts providing stability to interwoven logs. Type 2 structures will be built on existing gravel bars during low flow; also using posts for stability and Type 3 structures will be post-stabilized individual trees with an attached rootwad. Each structure type was designed by an engineering firm with expertise in river restoration. The structures have been selected to provide habitat and to be stable at the 100-year flood.

Proponent/Applicant: Yakama Nation Fisheries, Yakima Klickitat Fisheries Project
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Location of Proposal, including street, if any: Yakima River Mile 185, near Cle Elum, Kittitas County, Washington: Township 20N, Range 15E, Section 32.

Lead Agency: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

WDFW has determined that this proposal will likely not have a significant adverse impact on the environment. Therefore, state law¹ does not require an environmental impact statement (EIS). WDFW made this determination of nonsignificance (DNS) after we reviewed the environmental checklist and other information on file with us.

We issued this DNS according to state rules.² We will **not act on this proposal for 14 days** from the date we issued the DNS. Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on this proposal or DNS. We must receive your comments within 14 days of the date of this letter. The comment period will end at **5:00 pm on October ~~3~~ 17, 2014**.

Method of Comment: The following procedures shall govern the method to comment on agency SEPA proposals. Comments received through these procedures are part of the official SEPA record for this proposal.

You can submit your comments any one of the following ways:

- Email to SEPAdesk2@dfw.wa.gov
- Online at the WDFW SEPA website comment link at: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/>
- Fax to (360) 902-2946;
- Mail to the address below.

Responsible Official: Lisa Wood

Position/Title: SEPA/NEPA Coordinator, WDFW Regulatory Services Section


Address: 600 Capitol Way North, Olympia, WA 98501-1091

After the comment period closes, applicants may view the updated status of this proposal on the WDFW SEPA website: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/>. Once the status is posted as final, applicants and permittees may take action on the proposal. When a proposal is modified or withdrawn, notice will be given in accordance with state law.¹

If you have questions about this DNS or the details of the proposal, contact Lisa Wood at the address, e-mail, or fax number above; you can also call her at (360) 902-2260.

DATE OF ISSUE: September 18, 2014

SIGNATURE:



Footnotes

1. RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c)
2. WAC 197-11-340(2).